

*The sky is clothed in grey
The sun has nought to say
The weather's changed in a single day
And winter is here to stay.*

*The days grow shorter
The nights grow longer
The sun is paler
And Jack Frost is stronger.*

*But in the barren wintertime
There comes a wondrous sight
It is the star of Bethlehem
That sheds its warming light.*

*It tells us of a little Child
In a lowly stall begotten
It warms the cockles of our hearts
And winter is forgotten*

*Said Marjorie Lear:
"Oh dear, oh dear,
I got a teddy again this year,
Santa missed my letter I fear."*

*"Well, I was lucky,"
said Peter, her brother,
"My sledge was broken; I needed another.
I'll give my thanks to father and mother."*

*"Good morning," said their parents
as they came into the room,
"You're both contented or so we assume,
but Marjorie, why this expression of utter gloom?"*

*"My letter never got to Santa," said Marj
"The teddy's okay but it's not very large
to use a big word it's persiflage."*

*"That word's not quite right
But we'll do better next year.
Now do be quiet, just for a while.
Who never gets presents on this special day?...
Let's give HIM our love;
let's kneel and say: Thank you, Lord,
for coming our way."*

HONEY-MELON MOON

Large, staring eyes, drawn cheeks, swollen belly and emaciated limbs told their story. The child was starving. She had wandered and wandered until she had reached a settlement. Now, she was furtively inspecting a compost heap, her head constantly bobbing up and down, side to side, like that of a bird, wary, and suspicious of every sound. The African sky was darkening rapidly. The child left the compost, and using her last strength, climbed a mimosa tree. Yesterday she had seen, not so far away, a pride of lions.

The night was bitter cold. Stars now shone brightly in the heavens and there was a sickle moon. The child stared. The moon reminded her of a slice of honey melon, and her stomach reacted with spasmodic pains. Eventually she fell into an uneasy sleep.

The barking of a dog awakened her. Frightened, she fell from the tree. She suffered no injury, nor did she feel pain, for the nerves in her body had long lost their sensitivity. A voice said, "Are you alright, my child?"

The girl looked up and saw a middle-aged woman. The woman was clad in tropical dress and carried a white parasol.

"Well, answer me, child. You've needn't be afraid."

"Hungry," the child said, by way of an answer, and then began to cry piteously.

The woman hung her parasol on the tree and gently lifted the child, marvelling that she was still alive, for her body was more bones than flesh.

"Where you take me?"

"Home, my child."

The girl began to struggle. "No, not good."

"Hush, be still. And be quiet."

The woman carried the child to her bungalow. To the child, the dwelling was enormous.

A servant came to the woman.

"N'gumbo," the woman said, handing him the child, "I want you to give her some soup. Not too much, she can eat some-

thing more solid later, after she's been bathed. Then she can sleep in the spare room."

"In the *guest room*, Memsahib?"

"You heard what I said. Get on with it."

"Ya, Memsahib."

There was a hell of a row later that day.

"A black sleeping in the guestroom?" shouted the woman's husband.

"I will not have that word used in this house. The child is a human being. God created her, just as He created you and me. Have you forgotten what today is?"

There was a long silence, then the man walked out of the living room and to the guest room. He opened the door quietly. The counterpane had fallen onto the floor and the man could see the sleeping child's pitiful condition. He closed the door softly and went back to his wife.

"You win," he said. "Let's invite everyone this evening."

"Oh darling, thank you."

Outdoors that evening, two European people and a dozen Africans sang "Silent night" in front of an enormous, plastic Christmas tree. The child sat on the cool earth staring up at the tree, fascinated by the brightly burning candles. Things she had never seen in her life.

Above and beyond the tree, the honey-melon moon hung in the sky, accompanied by a myriad of twinkling stars.

This incident happened somewhere in Central Africa on the 24 December last year.

*Oh lovely dawn, oh precious morn,
this is the day on which Jesus was born.
A heavenly Prince in a manger forlorn.
Jesus our Saviour was born,
Jesus our Saviour was born.*

*On this wondrous day we should rejoice,
let us all sing with harmonious voice.
Give thanks to our God in Heaven above,
He sent us His Son with his love.
sent us His Son with his love.*

Christmas Carol: O lovely Dawn

Anthony Paul Curtis

mf Oh love - ly dawn, oh pre - cious morn,
On this won-drous day we should re - joice,

this is the day on which Je - sus was born. A heav'n-ly Prince in a man-ger for-lorn.
let us all sing with har - mo - ni - ous voice. Give thanks to God in Hea-ven a - bove, He

Je - sus our Sa - viour was born, Je - sus our Sa - viour was born.
sent us His Son with his love. He sent us His Son with his love.



Santa

The children were puzzled, earlier in the evening they had been listening to their parents telling them how Santa had to climb down chimneys to deliver the Christmas presents. Now they were tucked in their beds, and Peter, who was older than his sister Alice, and logically (so he claimed) more intelligent, said he wasn't quite sure how anyone could climb *down* a chimney, and Alice told him to shut up because she was thinking hard.

"You're taking your time," said Peter after a long while.

"Of course I am," retorted Alice, "I don't want to jump to wrong conclusions. Anyhow, I've decided that what Mummy and Daddy say about Santa is nonsense."

"What makes you think it's nonsense?" Peter asked.

"Well, from what I know of Santa, he's supposed to have a snowy white beard and hair, and wears a bright red coat with white lining. Can you really imagine him clambering down sooty chimneys dressed like that?"

Her brother sighed, "Oh dear, you don't really think that's the *real* Santa, do you? I mean, not like those dressed-up people who hand out cheap toys in department Stores? They're no more Santas than I'm Donald Duck."

"So I was right. Santa Claus is just a crafty idea to make people buy things."

"I don't care what you say, I believe in him."

"And I don't."

"But Mummy said if we don't believe in him, we won't believe in anything."

"I know," said Alice, "but it's awfully difficult believing in someone you can't see."

Then without warning, Peter sprang out of bed.

"Where are you going?" asked his sister.

"I'm going to settle this once and for all. He's supposed to bring the presents this evening, isn't he? I'm going down to the dining room and keep a look out for him. If he does come, I'll see him. And then you'll *have* to believe in him."

"Ha!" exclaimed Alice, "You won't be able to stay awake. I know you. In half an hour you'll be snoring your head off. But go on, at least I won't have to stuff my ears with cotton wool."

Peter covered his pyjamas with a thick woollen pullover and jeans and crept out of the bedroom.

Early next morning his father found him lying fast asleep on the carpet in the dining room. He lifted the boy gently and carried him to bed, taking care not to wake Alice. Then he went downstairs again and helped his wife to arrange the presents beneath the gaily decorated Christmas tree.

Peter woke to the sound of his sister's voice.

"Peter... Peter? I knew you couldn't stay awake."

"Oh shut up," said Peter, his voice hoarse from sleep. "I did stay awake until it was almost daylight." He knew it was a lie, but he was unable to admit that he had failed in his quest.

"Did you see him?" asked Alice.

"No, I didn't," said Peter, his voice rather loud.

"So that's it." said Alice.

"What do you mean, that's it?"

"I don't believe in Santa."

"Well I *do*" said Peter "and I'll tell you why. You agree that the Santas we see in the streets and department Stores at Christmas-time are not genuine?" Alice nodded. "Well, I believe that the *real* Santa delivers the presents not dressed in a bright red coat and snowy white whiskers, but *disguised as a chimney sweep*. And that's why we never see him, because he's always covered with soot."

"But we don't *have* a chimney."

"What difference does that make?" said Peter. "Santa's been doing it for thousands of years, and when someone's *that* old, they're not going to change their ways so easily, chimneys or no chimneys."

"All right," said Alice, getting out of bed, "but as soon as I've washed and dressed I'm going to ask Mummy who really brings the presents."

"You know what the answer will be," warned Peter.

"Yes, I know" sighed Alice. "Santa."

Later, Alice said: "Now I *know* he doesn't exist."

"How?" asked Peter.

"Well, in November I wrote to him asking for a new pair of roller skates, and all I got today was an over-sized Teddy Bear."

"You wrote to Santa Claus?"

"Yes."

"I thought you said you didn't believe in him."

"I thought I'd give it a try," said Alice.

"You're kidding me. Where did you send the letter to?"

"The North Pole of course."

"Why does everyone think that Santa lives at the North Pole?"

"Because of the reindeers, silly."

"All right, but what's the address?"

"I've no idea, but I'm certain that he's the only person able to stand the cold out there. The postman wouldn't have any difficulty finding *him*."

"And where did you get the postage stamp from?"

"I didn't."

"Are you telling me you posted the letter without a stamp?"

"Yes."

"Well! All I can say is I feel sorry for Santa. If all the kids send him unstamped letters it must cost him lots of money."

"I don't know about that," said Alice, who was not particularly interested in financial matters, "All I know is I didn't get what I wanted for Christmas."

Peter thought hard for a moment, then said: "Well, either Santa didn't get your letter, he couldn't read your writing, or he simply made a mistake. After all, he's only human, isn't he?"

*Sound the trumpets beat the drums
for our Lord Jesus comes
Ring the bells sing songs of praise
be joyful through these Advent days.*

*Play the fiddle blow the horn
for our Lord Jesus is born
tinsel the tree and cut the holly
light up the lights it's time to be jolly.*

*Never forget whose birthday it was,
who came to the world to suffer because
we sinners are helpless and go easily astray,
and Jesus He bled our sins away.*

*Christmastide has begun blessings for us all,
Mary's child God's own son was born in a stall,
let us rejoice and sing our praise
on this holy Day of days.
on this holy Day of days.*

*Wise men come, from the east, offerings bring,
sweet incense, gold and myrrh for the new King,
let us be thankful for that day,
when our Saviour came to stay.
when our Saviour came to stay.*

*Shepherds in the fields one night
beheld a wondrous sight:
angels from Heaven on high,
their robes shining bright.*

*Our dear Lord was born this day,
Give thanks to God on high,
Let us sing, praise the King,
born in Bethlehem.*

*Christ came to save us all,
born to hear us when we call,
call on Him to help us be
Christian people living free.*

*Follow the donkey to Bethlehem
it bears a precious load;
Mary and Joseph are on their way,
seeking a humble abode.
Aiya, Aiya seeking a humble abode.*

*Hear the donkey, its joyous call
Watching the scene in the stall.
For there was born on that wonderful morn
A Child in a manger forlorn.
Aiya, Aiya, A Child in a manger forlorn.*

*Now gives the donkey its proudest bray
lauding the Babe on the hay,
lauding the Christ child for that was He.
Jesus was born today.
Aiya, Aiya, And He came here to stay.*

Church Bells Ring
Christmas carol for mezzo-soprano **Anthony Paul Curtis**

andante grazioso

Church bells ring, good news bring, earth - ly choirstheir an-thems sing.

See the wise men hur-ry-ing on their way, gifts they bring, for their King, a

Shepherds in the Fields 2

8

child a-sleep in the hay. Oh Hap - py dawn Christ was born on this ver - y

12

spe - cial morn. An - gels came from Hea - ven a - bove, sang of the Lord God

16

and His love. Now give voice, sing and pray, Je - sus our Sa - viour was

Shepherds in the Fields 3

20

born this day. Born he was for you and me, and He died to

24

set us free, yet He lives as you can see, yes, He lives e-

28

ter - nal - ly.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

"Put your hand out," said Patrick.

Linda did so and something prickly brushed her hand.

"What is it?" she asked, puzzled.

"Guess."

"Oh," she exclaimed. "Is it a plant?"

"Yes," said Patrick

"But what's that jingling sound?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Is it - no - it can't be..."

"Yes, it is."

Linda was silent for a moment.

"Is it Christmas? How long have I been out?"

"Almost three weeks," said Patrick.. "You were in a coma."

"Three weeks? Oh, it seems like yesterday... I was..."

She shuddered, and Patrick said, "Try not to think of it now."

Patrick placed the small, decorated plastic tree on the locker beside the bed. He leaned over slowly and kissed his wife gently on the cheek.

"Oh, Patrick," she said, "Will I ever be able to see again?"

"I don't know, darling. We'll have to wait. The doctors are doing all they can."

A nurse came to the bed and said to Patrick, "You must go now, we don't want to over-tire your wife, do we?"

"See you the day after tomorrow, darling," said Patrick as he turned to go.

While the nurse was helping her to wash, Linda thought of the accident. She had been driving serenely on her way to the Office, when a lorry in front of her had stopped without warning. Its doors had swung open and a large bale of paper had sprung out onto the road. Linda swerved, a totally reflex action, and she had been rammed by another car. Now, three weeks later, she realised that she was blind.

"Have three weeks really gone by?" asked Linda, and the nurse said, "Yes, but don't you worry, you're back with us again, aren't you?"

"But I can't see." The words were plaintive, with a hint of frustration.

"I know," said the nurse. "It is not nice, but tell you what, try to see in your mind's eye. Use your imagination. I'm sure you have plenty of that. Things won't be quite so hard for you then."

The next day was Christmas Eve, and the nurses visited the wards carrying lighted candles and singing Christmas carols. A nurse stood beside Linda's bed and described the scene. The ward was decorated with paper-chains of various colours. Over the door was a wooden crucifix, rather modern in style, and in one corner of the ward stood a large Christmas tree, adorned with tinsel, trinkets, and illuminated with electric lights in the form of candles. Mrs. Murgitson, the nurse explained, was in the bed opposite Linda, and wearing a Father Christmas hat and looked very funny indeed.

Linda remembered what the nurse had said the yesterday, and was certain that she could "see" clearly in her mind's eye everything that was being described.

When Patrick visited her on Christmas morning, he said brightly, "Hello, darling, I've brought someone with me."

"Is it mother-in-law?" asked Linda, apprehensively.

"No," said Patrick laughing. "It's Professor Morn. He's here specially. Actually gave up his holiday. He's got good news for you."

"Yes," said Professor Morn, whose voice sounded rather like that of a grizzly bear, "We are pretty certain that you will eventually regain your eyesight. It will take time, of course, but we are confident that our findings leave no room for error."

Patrick took Linda in his arms and said, with much emotion, "Merry Christmas, darling. Merry Christmas to everyone."

And all the people in the ward fervently echoed his words.

*Above a stall in Bethlehem
There shone a brilliant star
It drew the shepherds from their fields
And wise men from afar.*

*The wise men brought their offerings
The shepherds brought their sheep
There was a bond between them all,
Their feelings strong and deep.*

*They found a mother and her child
As the Angel had declared
And there was Joseph standing by
His happiness full shared*

*They knelt in wonder at the sight
Of Jesus where he lay,
Of Mary's face so proud and bright,
On that first Christmas day.*

Gloria

für Lioba Petzold

Anthony Paul Curtis

Moderato

S
A
T
B

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis

Organ
/Piano

5
De - - - - - o. Glo - - ri - a
5
De - - - - - o. Glo - - ri - a
5
De - - - - - o. Glo - - ri - a
5
De - - - - - o. Glo - - ri - a

5
De - - - - - o. Glo - - ri - a
5
De - - - - - o. Glo - - ri - a

Gloria 2

9 in ex-cel-sis De - o. Glo - ri - a Glo - ri - a Et in ter-ra

9 in ex-cel-sis De - o. Glo - ri - a. Glo - ri - a. Et in ter-ra

9 in ex-cel-sis De - o. Glo - ri - a. Glo - ri - a.

9 in ex-cel-sis De - o. Glo - ri - a. Glo - ri - a.

9

15 pax ho - mi-ni-bus bo - nae vo-lun -

15 pax ho - mi-ni-bus bo - nae vo-lun -

15 Et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni-bus bo - nae vo-lun -

15 Et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni-bus bo - nae vo-lun -

15

Gloria 3

[illegible]

Gloria 4

27 Be-ne-di-ci-mus be-ne-di-ci-mus

27 Be-ne-di-ci-mus be-ne-di-ci-mus

27 Cum Sancto Spi-ri-tu in glo-ri-a De-i Pa-tris.

27 Cum Sancto Spi-ri-tu in glo-ri-a De-i Pa-tris.

31 be-ne-di-ci-mus te. Be-ne-di-ci-mus be-ne-di-ci-mus

31 be-ne-di-ci-mus te. Be-ne-di-ci-mus be-ne-di-ci-mus

31 Cum Sancto Spi-ri-tu in glo-ri-a De-i Pa-tris. Be-ne-di-ci-mus be-ne-di-ci-mus

31 Cum Sancto Spi-ri-tu in glo-ri-a De-i Pa-tris. Be-ne-di-ci-mus be-ne-di-ci-mus

Gloria 5

35

be - ne - di - ci - mus te.

35

Be - ne - di - ci - mus te.

35

be - ne - di - ci - mus te.

35

be - ne - di - ci - mus te.

35

35

39

allegro

A - dor - a - mus, a - dor - a - mus a - dor - a - mus a - dor - a - mus te.

39

A - dor - a - mus, a - dor - a - mus a - dor - a - mus a - dor - a - mus te.

39

A - dor - a - mus, a - dor - a - mus a - dor - a - mus te.

39

a - dor - a - mus a - dor - a - mus te.

39

39

Gloria 6

43

A - dor-a - mus, a - dor-a - mus a-dor-a-mus te.

43

A - dor-a - mus, a - dor-a - mus a - dor-a - mus a-dor-a-mus te.

8

43

A - dor-a - mus, a - dor-a - mus a-dor-a-mus te.

43

A - dor-a - mus, a - dor-a - mus a - dor-a-mus te.

43

47

A-dor-a-mus, A-dor-a-mus, a - dor - a - mus

47

A-dor-a-mus, A-dor-a-mus, a - dor - a - mus

8

47

A-dor-a-mus, A-dor-a-mus, a - dor - a - mus

47

A-dor-a-mus, a-dor-a-mus a - dor - a - mus

Gloria 7

51

te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus

51

te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus

51

te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus

8

51

te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus

te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus

51

51

55

lau - da - mus lau-da-mus te. Lau - da - mus te,

55

lau - da - mus lau-da-mus te. Lau - da - mus te,

55

lau - da - mus lau-da-mus te. Lau - da - mus te,

8

55

lau - da - mus lau-da-mus te. Lau - da - mus te,

lau - da - mus lau-da-mus te. Lau - da - mus te,

55

55

Gloria 8

59

59 lau - da - mus te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus te.

59 lau - da - mus te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus te.

8 59 lau - da - mus te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus te.

59 lau - da - mus te. Lau - da - mus te, lau - da - mus te.

59

59

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